

THE OTTAWA FREE TRADER.
Ottawa, December 21, 1850.

THE PLANK ROAD TO PAW PAW.

We are pleased to find that our property holders and business men have to some degree wakened up to the importance of the proposed plank road from this place to Paw Paw Grove, and that matters are such as to give promise of its actual commencement early in the spring. A subscription has been opened, and the rate at which stock has thus far been taken shows that success is within our grasp, if all do their duty. But it must be understood, once for all, by the property holders on the route of the proposed road, that it will not depend on Ottawa alone to build this road. Our people are willing to bear double or even more than double their proportion of any fair assessment upon the value of their real estate, but it would be unreasonable, on the part of those living on the route, whose property is to be more than equally benefited, to ask us to bear all.

At present, it is only proposed to go as far as Munsonville, a distance of twelve miles. By a liberal estimate, the cost cannot exceed over \$1500 per mile, or \$18,000 for the whole road. Now it is not expected that farmers on the route will contribute much money, but if they do, what was done on the railroads north of us, and on the Peru plank road, they will take stock enough to pay for the grading, bridging, &c., and for hauling the plank from the canal up the line of the road; and as the road will pass into a region of heavy timber and of saw mills, it is reasonable to look to that quarter for a fair proportion of plank.

But let none so far mistake as to suppose that the thought is entertained of stopping the road at Munsonville. This part is cut out for one summer's work. It would be very difficult, if at all possible, to complete more than half of the road in one season, and would not be wise to undertake to raise more money at a time than we are prepared to make use of. With twelve miles of the road completed and yielding revenue, our people will in another season feel vastly more able and willing to give towards completing the road than they do now to begin it.

By the notice in another column it will be seen that the books for receiving subscriptions of stock to this road will be opened at the office of W. M. Le Land, Esq., in Ottawa, and at the store of Wm. M. True, in Harding. It is also intended, in the course of a week or two, to call on all such, in this place and between here and Munson, as are interested in the construction of this road, with a view of obtaining their subscription for stock. In the mean time, assuring all concerned that it will require no small effort to raise the amount required if it can be done at all, we trust that every man on the route will sit down and coolly calculate the advantage in ease and comfort as well as dollars and cents, which this road will be to him, and if he do find that its completion would be equal to doubling the value of his property, we are certain at least, it will increase its value enough to justify his taking a fair proportion of the stock.

THE PUBLIC LANDS.

The report of the Commissioner of the General Land Office shows that the whole quantity of lands sold and disposed of during the year 1848, including that located by military bounties, state selections, &c., was 4,932,000 acres, amounting at \$1.25 per acre, to \$6,162,500. For 1849, 5,184,410 acres were disposed of in like manner, amounting, at the same rate, to \$6,480,625. And for the three quarters of 1850, exclusive of the bounty locations not yet returned for the third quarter, 2,815,866 acres, were disposed of, amounting, at the rate stated, to \$3,519,832. The whole area of the public lands, exclusive of those in Oregon, California, New Mexico, Utah, the Indian and Nebraska Territories, was 424,108,653 acres. That of these about one-fourth have been sold for the sum of \$125,339,592, while the whole cost of every kind to the government, including the amount paid to France for Louisiana, to Spain for the Floridas, and for the extinguishment of the Indian title, was \$74,067,879, making the net profit to the government \$60,281,213, or an average of nearly one and a quarter millions of dollars annually for the last fifty years. Nearly the same amount has been granted, in bounties, for works of internal improvements, &c. The average cost of the public lands, including the purchase, the extinguishing of the Indian title, surveying, selling and managing, &c., is only 21 1/2 cents per acre, while the government receives \$1.25 per acre, making a net profit of \$1.03 1/2 cents per acre.

The sale of the mineral lands in Oregon and California is recommended in the report, and the benefits of that system, as compared with the leasing of those lands, are fully considered and fully sustained. The evils growing out of the leasing of the mineral lands in Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, are alluded to, and, we think, clearly shown that that system has wholly failed as a source of revenue; that it has been a loss pecuniarily to the government, while it has been a source of crime and endless litigation.

The whole document is ably written; and is full and comprehensive in all its departments.

THE O. B. C. have determined on having a torch light procession, with appropriate music, the night of their annual festival, (New Year's Eve) &c. &c. therefore, who conveniently can, should prepare themselves with a torch. The simplest form of constructing a torch is, to take a ball, 1 1/2 or 2 inches in diameter, of cotton or linen yarn, or a linen rag closely wrapped, and sewed, so as not to unwind, and fasten it with a nail to the end of a stick 2 feet long, and then saturate it with spirits of turpentine.

It is also recommended that each member should prepare himself with a written note, accompanied by a testimonial name, for the occasion.

A social invitation is extended to all unmarried men between the ages of 18 and 30, in the county as well as in town, to join in this grand festival.

PLANK ROAD STOCK.

There are few ways of investing money which will pay better than in plank roads. The following item from the Chicago Democrat will give some idea of the value of stock in the North-Western Plank Road just completed by that city:

"This road is now completed to Dutchman's Point, twelve miles, with a western branch extending from Dutchman's Point to the Des Plaines river, a distance of four miles; making sixteen miles in all. This sixteen miles has been constructed at a cost of about \$94,000. For seven days last week the receipts from tolls on the road were

\$270; a fair percentage on the capital expended being over \$1,000 per month, or \$12,000 per year."

CENTRAL RAIL ROAD.

A friend has handed us the following communication upon this subject:

By the late magnificent grant of land by Congress to the State to aid in the completion of this great enterprise, the road will soon be commenced. The work will now go on—it must go on. The State will hardly undertake its consummation—some company or corporation must do it. The people want the road, and will have it, and they will demand to have it completed in the shortest time consistent with the best interests of the country, and on the best route.

This section of the state is deeply interested in the undertaking. The road must come to, but will not stop at the Illinois river. It will be carried to Galena, and perhaps to Chicago. It must cross the river. How and where shall it cross? Shall it cross at Peru? We do not see how this can be done. To facilitate the business of the road, there must be a bridge over the river, on which the cars can pass. A bridge at Peru will greatly obstruct and interfere with navigation.

Much has been said in the Peru papers about the destruction to navigation caused by the bridge at Peru. It is strenuously contended by those editors, that the state has no power or right to authorize the erection of a bridge over the Illinois river, so as to impede or obstruct navigation. We presume the writers of those articles have looked carefully into this matter, and formed a correct judgment. The crossing there should be above Peru; perhaps it would be at La Salle, as there is comparatively a small amount of navigation above that point. A bridge can probably be constructed at La Salle, Utica, or Ottawa. It is vastly important to secure all the advantages of the rail road, and also to preserve the navigation of this important locality.

We would, of course, be glad to have the crossing at Ottawa, but do not expect it, unless it will not subvert the great public interests.

One thing, however, seems certain: if the State has no power to build a bridge over the Illinois, so as to impede navigation, some other party, such as Peru, should be selected for the crossing. We do not propose now to enter into a discussion of this subject. We have only desired to call attention to it, so that the proper investigations and inquiries may be made. While we shall fairly and earnestly contend for all our local advantages and interests, we shall not expect the good of the public generally to be sacrificed for the advantage of any particular locality, not even for the benefit of our own favorite Ottawa.

We like the tone of this communication. Though we are disposed, without proposing to discuss the subject, to attach much weight to the constitutional objection to the bridging navigable streams, yet we do not rely on that objection to attract attention to Ottawa as the natural point for the central rail road to cross the Illinois river. Our reliance is more on the fact that the natural superiority of Ottawa over all other points, must be self-evident and apparent to any man who will take the trouble to look at a map and inform himself on the subject.

The objection to crossing at Peru or La Salle, besides that arising from the obstruction of navigation, is, that the nature of the locality is such as to render the construction of a bridge of the strength, safety and dimensions needed, impossible, or at least an undertaking involving such an expense as to render it out of the question.

As to crossing at Peru, we presume it is hardly thought of. It must be apparent that no bridge fit for a train of cars can be constructed there, and yet anything like the free navigation of the river be kept up. Our state will not be so foolish as to place new obstructions in the way of the navigation of the Illinois, so long at least as there shall be no greater necessity for it than exists at present.

And the objection to Peru applies with equal force to any point south of Peru. The road, it is now settled, must cross at Peru, or near there.

Now, men who have looked at the ground, know that Utica, or in fact any place on the Illinois river, from a mile or two west of Ottawa to Peru, would afford a very little better crossing place than there is at Peru or La Salle.

We must, then, come up as far as Ottawa to find a good crossing place. Here there are high, solid, rock banks on both sides, and but a few hundred feet from the bank to water. While a bridge at Peru or La Salle would cost at least half a million, and then not be safe—fifteen or twenty thousand dollars would build an excellent bridge at Ottawa.

But, it is objected, the law making the grant of lands to the state to build this road requires that it shall terminate at La Salle, and it is not policy to ask a change of the law. We grant it would be worse than bad policy to bring this matter again before Congress, and no change of the law is asked or needed. It is true, the law requires that the road shall terminate at La Salle, but does it then follow that the road must there cross the river? Was it intended to preclude the state from all exercise of choice or discretion in fixing upon the crossing place, and confine it to a point immediately opposite La Salle, and neither a rod to the right nor left? This will hardly be pretended. If, in determining the route from Bloomington to La Salle it shall be found much cheaper and more feasible to cross the river at Ottawa and thence proceed down on the north side to the terminus, surely there is nothing in the grant to prevent the exercise of such sound discretion in locating the road.

From La Salle, the route could then be extended to Galena, as the law contemplates, and another branch be carried off, via Ottawa, to Chicago. And if the people of Chicago, and of the State are wise, they will see that this is the route dictated by their best interests. Suppose the plan succeeds, which we have been astonished to see broached in Chicago, of branching off from the main trunk of the road at Shelbyville, or some point far south of here, and running in a direct line to Chicago. How long will it be before the Southern Michigan Rail Road will be connected with this Chicago branch? And then where will Chicago be, on the great route from Buffalo, &c., to Cairo? Where would be the "State policy of such a division?"

We have but glanced at this subject, and shall resume it hereafter.

ANDREWS' DAGUERREAN GALLERY.

We have had the pleasure of visiting Mr. Andrews' rooms over Sanger's new store and inspecting his pictures, which we found to be of superior quality. We would earnestly recommend to such of our citizens who are desirous of procuring miniatures, either of themselves, friends, or their children, to give him a call. His terms are reasonable, and the quality of his pictures and casts vary to suit all who may desire them. He has taken the rooms he occupies with a view of remaining here permanently, and it is hoped that we may receive a liberal patronage. See his advertisement.

RIOT OF WOMEN.—The Indiana convention, by a vote of 68 to 52, has adopted the following provision:

"The real and personal property of women, whether owned before marriage or afterwards acquired by purchase or gift (other than from the husband in fraud of his creditors) devolve or descend, shall be and remain secured to them, under equitable conditions, by law."

Calvert, the Store Agent, and the Chicago Telegraph and Post Offices.

Quite a racy correspondence has recently been carried on between Mr. JOHN CALVERT, an agent sent from St. Louis through this state to Chicago, to arrest fugitive slaves, and Mr. JAMES GAMBLE, manager of the Southern Telegraph Office, in Chicago.

It appears that Mr. Calvert's efforts to arrest fugitives, in Chicago, (and he even went to Detroit and from there to Canada) proved a perfect failure—not being able to return with a single captive. Mortified and chagrined at his bad success, on his return to his employers, he endeavored to excuse his own bad management by casting the whole blame upon the persons employed in the Chicago Telegraph and Post Offices. According to his statements in the St. Louis Republic, of the 19th ult., Mr. C. charges those employed in the Chicago Post Office with suppressing his letters; and says that, although he expected many more he only received two, while in that city, and that these had been broken open. He also charges the operators in the Telegraph Office with suppressing communications between him and his friends in St. Louis. He declares that he left thirty-two telegraphic dispatches at the office to be sent to St. Louis, all requiring immediate answers, but could never receive them; and that he believed that one of these dispatches was used to give information to his contemplated visit to Detroit.

In the Republic of the 4th inst. appears a note from Mr. Gamble, in which he pronounces the statements of Mr. Calvert untrue;—and says he did not send thirty-two dispatches from the Chicago office—not one fourth that number, which the records of the office will prove. And that every answer sent from St. Louis was duly received and delivered; which the books in that office will prove. "On no account whatever," says Mr. G. "would we take the responsibility of suppressing dispatches or divulging their contents, whether relative to fugitives or anything else." Mr. C. further says that,

"The facts of the matter seem to be, that Mr. C. has been rather unsuccessful in his attempts at arresting fugitives here, merely because he did not take the right course, for I have every reason to believe that fugitives can be taken from Chicago with as little trouble as from any other town in the state, providing a lawful course is taken; and it is very evident he has gotten up these 'bugbear' stories for no other purpose than to gain sympathy from his employers and friends in St. Louis. I hope he has succeeded, for he probably needs all he can get, but I am opposed to his gaining it at my expense."

To this Mr. Calvert replied, in the Republic, of the 6th inst., in which he reiterates his former charges; and adds, that he had frequently complained, in the telegraph office of not receiving dispatches—that he was compelled to obtain permission to use some other persons name through which he finally secured an answer to one of his dispatches, and which was the only one he received. He did not remember the amount he had paid for dispatches deposited, but as to the number—thirty-two—he knew to be correct. "These facts," says he "should convince any impartial mind that either Mr. Gamble, the clerks, or all about the office are abolitionists. He also re-asserts his belief that some one in the Tel. office did give information to Detroit of his intention to go there, as it was known there five hours before he arrived. In reference to his letters he says:

"So far as opening my letters is concerned, I have to say that the Postmaster did not deny the fact, but said they were opened by a man of the same name. This was plausible—but on seeing Mr. Calvert, who is a better, more informed man than I have been, about the city two or three weeks, and had just that day returned. 'Since my return home, I learn there were quite a number of letters written to me, only two of which I received.'"

All this is again denied, through the same medium, in a communication, from Mr. Gamble, of the 9th inst., accompanied with affidavits from the Clerk and Receiver and the Assistant Operator of the Chicago telegraph office, and one from R. S. Miller, Manager of the Detroit line, all corroborating his former statements, and proving to a demonstration that Mr. Calvert did not, while in that city, send more than four dispatches, all of which were duly received by the persons to whom they were directed, which the books and files of the St. Louis office will show; and that no information was sent by telegraph from Chicago to Detroit, as stated by Mr. Calvert.

The respectability of the persons whose names appear to the affidavits leaves no doubt of their correctness; and forces the conviction upon the mind of every impartial reader, that Mr. Calvert has been guilty of publishing gross and outrageous falsehoods, in reference to those engaged in the Chicago telegraph office.

We give this full statement of this controversy to aid in defending so respectable a set of men—their characters for veracity and fidelity have long been established on this line—from the libellous charges of a man like Mr. C. whose employment alone is enough to condemn him in the minds of every respectable man.

We know but little about the private character of Mr. Calvert, or of his skill as a slave-catcher; but we do know that he is not a fit man to come north on such an errand. If the people of our neighboring states wish to recover their runaway slaves in Illinois, let them send men who have intelligence enough to know what they are about, and they will have no difficulty in accomplishing their ends. The people of this state will not resist any law of Congress, they are a law-abiding people. But the slave holder of St. Louis, or any other place, need not expect that they will assist in, or even countenance the kidnapping of persons by some straggling vagabond without legal process or any thing to show that the persons attempted to be taken were slaves.

We have been requested to notice that the 1st Presbyterian Church of Ottawa, formerly worshipping in the Mechanics' Hall, will hereafter hold regular meetings in the New Hall in the brick block of Sanger and Armour. Hours of service on the Sabbath, 10 o'clock A.M., and 2 o'clock P.M.

The Free School, taught by Mr. Jenks, we are requested to say, has been removed to a room in Messrs. Sanger & Armour's New Brick block.

DISCOVERY OF THE MOON.—Professor Mitchell, in his Astronomical Lecture, at Brooklyn, the other evening, mentioned one or two facts which read very much like a biography of a respectable lady of this world:

"He explained the fact that the moon, more distant than the other planets, never shows but one face to us, revolving in her orbit in the same time which she occupies in her orbit. But though some sixty or seventy sources of disturbance have been discovered and calculated, still the moon will get out of her place. Venus, which moves more rapidly than the Earth, for one hundred and forty years tends to bend the Earth's orbit one way, and then the same length of time counteracts the influence. The earth in turn affects the Moon, so that it has advanced in two hundred and forty years, one hundredth part of its diameter."

THE MALLS ARE IN A bad condition. A telegraphic dispatch from Detroit of the 15th inst. says: "No eastern mail for the past three days. One is expected by Ohio from Cleveland and Buffalo to night." This is a great administration for the management of mails.

Lieutenant General.

A board of officers of the United States Army who recently met at Washington, of which Gen. Jesup was president, determined to recommend the creation of a Lieutenant General.

We regard the appointment of this officer as utterly unnecessary. The idea was spurned and ridiculed by the officers of our army, when Mr. Benton introduced the project, during the Mexican war; and if this officer is superfluous when the country is engaged in a foreign war with an army of 50,000 men, there can certainly be no necessity for it in a time of peace.

The whole number of our regular army is now but little over 6000, to this congress should add 2000 or 3000 more, to protect our citizens along our frontier, and in the territories of the Indians; but allowing that the number were double what it now is, cannot one Major and two Brigadier Generals, with their host of subalterns, do the commanding this number of soldiers require? Did this board of officers mean to indicate to the world that the task of "ordering about" 6000 or even 10,000 men, in times of peace, was above their capacity—that some superior power would be necessary to give directions during the removal of a "squad" of soldiers from Choctaw to Kickapoo? Why, had this recommendation emanated from any other source we should have regarded it as a reflection upon the intelligence and military skill of our present military commanders?

Had we a standing army of 50,000 or 100,000 men, constantly held in readiness to suppress civil commotions, or to march to a foreign war, there might be some apology for creating this somewhat superfluous officer; but under our present army regulation, such a step it appears to us, would be decidedly ridiculous. And it is to be hoped, that congress will not gratify this freak of fancy of a set of military aspirants. We have already too many aristocratic tendencies; too much parade and ostentation for our dignity.

Under our present army regulation the Major General with the oldest commission is commander-in-chief, next to the President who commands the whole army and navy and the militia while in actual service. There can, therefore, be no dispute about rank between these two officers; and as to the Brigadier General, the one holding the oldest commission is senior in command, and so on down through every grade, and any dispute that may arise in this respect can readily be decided by comparing the dates of their respective commissions. The line, therefore is complete from the President down to Fourth Corporal, and all additions made to it must necessarily be inferior; and we are opposed to increasing the expenses of the government without accomplishing any good, or gaining for it an equivalent.

The Peoria Murders.—The following synopsis of the evidence upon which the murders of Mr. Hewitt, at Peoria, were convicted, and sentenced to be hung yesterday; but whose execution, as will be seen by our telegraph dispatches, has been strangely postponed:

The prisoners and another stand at the house of Mr. McAllister the night previous to the murder—left in the morning, and the other, a middle aged man, returned during the day, and stood until Sunday.

Mr. Hewitt on the morning of the 12th of October, presented a draft of \$1500 to Mr. Curtis, banker, which was paid. Mr. C. describes and identifies the money, and when it was paid, that one of the witnesses was present.

The prisoners were taken by Mr. Newell Hotchkiss on the night of the 13th ult., at Springfield, in bed. Thomas said "he was in for it, but would not have been but for George." George said they had earned the money on steamboats. The money was found on them.

Mr. Hewitt stood at the hotel of Mr. Decker overnight. While harnessing his horse the next morning, the two prisoners were there, and Mr. H. about that time said he was going to the bank. Prisoners seemed to be watching Mr. H. Mr. H. was met by one witness going out of town, and soon after, the prisoners following him at a rapid rate.

Two witnesses coming along the road saw two young men; not positively identified as the prisoners, but answering well to their general appearance, standing with Mr. Hewitt who was going to the ground, his horse and buggy at a little distance moving on. When seen they ran away, and Mr. H. arose and struggled through his buggy, fell two or three times, had a large gash on his head, and blood flowing, and was helped into the buggy. There were brickbats at the place.

There was some evidence tending to show that the prisoners after this were going across the adjoining fields, not identified as the prisoners, only partially by some peculiarities—were next seen on the bank of the river. They paid a Dutchman a dollar to put them across the river. One had a pistol and also bank notes in his hand.

Thence they were traced to Springfield, went part of the way on foot, and part of the way by horse. They themselves carried—showed their money and pistols.

The physicians examined, said there was a hole through Mr. Hewitt's skull; might have been made by ball or pointed instrument—no ball was found on examination, but might have fallen out. Before Mr. Hewitt the prisoners were brought before him, when he recognized them, and said one of them presented a pistol case, but as Mr. Hewitt did not think at the time that he would die, this testimony was not admitted, only to show the appearance of the prisoners.

Mr. Hewitt died the 7th day, the wound was the cause of his death.

There was some evidence tending to show that the prisoners did not expect a really heavy case was given. Some testimony was offered on the defence, but none that could avail anything.

The jury found a verdict of guilty, and sentence of death was pronounced, to be executed on the 20th of this month.

The prisoners, during all the time, exhibited a marked hardness and indifference to their fate, and protested they were not guilty of murder, and that the proof was not sufficient.

Cholera in San Francisco.

From the detailed accounts from California, we notice that the cholera has been more extensive in San Francisco than was indicated by the telegraphic dispatches we published two weeks ago. The disease is rapidly making its way up the river, and on to the ships and steamboats in the bay and on the river. On the G. H. Montague, on a trip from Sacramento City to San Francisco, passengers died of cholera; viz: Franklin Lamb, of Groton, Conn.; George Wolcott, Waltham, Mass.; John Holbrook, North Adams, Berkshire county, Mass.; John Spencer, Waltham, Mass.; Lemuel Fane, Warren, Rhode Island; Wm. Joyce, second mate, and John Reed. The captain and four others were down with the disease.

In San Francisco, on the 13th of October, there were 13 cases and 7 deaths. There had been no board of health organized, nor any correct way by which to come at the exact number of deaths, but this number seems to be but a fraction of the true state of things. The San Francisco Picaune says: "It is well known that the road leading from town towards the cemetery is constantly travelled, by night as well as by day, by carts loaded with the dead."

Max Jensen.—Aug. 22. After the news of Dr. Judson's death had been received at Maulmain, Mr. Mason writes:

Poor Mrs. Judson is suffering much. She is the picture of sorrow, yet calm and even cheerful. She will probably go home. Dr. Judson's death has spread a pall over our little circle. We feel that God has called him home to rest with Him, but we miss him everywhere.

Congress.

HOUSE.—N. Y. Branch Mint was the order of the day for the 2d Tuesday in January.

The speaker laid before the house a message from the President. Texas accepts Mr. Pierce's Boundary Bill. The President says great unanimity prevails on the subject in Texas, and he congratulates the country on the event.

SENATE.—The report of the Board of Officers who were called to consider the propriety of creating the rank of Lieut. General, and also what measures were necessary to prevent public officers from exercising civil duties, was referred to the Military committee and ordered to be printed.

Mr. Foster, in introducing the resolutions of the Mississippi Legislature, and they should not have been sent to me to be presented, and although I have nothing to say of the honor of the high-minded gentlemen of the Legislature, yet they have entirely mistaken the public sentiment of the State, and by so doing they will have made themselves ridiculous.

The Chair asked if the motion was made.

Mr. Foster said he had done as he was requested, and the Senate might do as they pleased with the resolutions.

Jefferson Davis moved the resolutions be read and a number.

The Secretary commenced reading when Mr. D. said he had got hold of wrong papers, and that he was now reading the resolutions of last year. Mr. Foster said that he was extremely sorry that the mistake had been made, but he had not read the papers—they were reading an interesting eulogy on John A. Quitman, the Governor of Mississippi. He should read a letter, and that was sufficient. The printing was ordered.

Mr. Gwin's resolution to print the President's message in Spanish, and also Mr. Walker's amendment to print it in the German and Norwegian languages, was laid upon the table.

The death of Mr. Harrison, a member of the previous House from Louisiana, was announced, and after a feeling eulogy by Messrs. Downs and Jefferson Davis, the Senate adjourned.

Messrs. Clay, Douglas, and Atchison appeared and took their seats.

The Chair laid before the Senate a statement from the Treasury of the receipts and expenditures.

HOUSE.—The Cheap Postage bill is to be the order of the day for Wednesday. The first Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of January, are set apart for the consideration of Territorial business of Oregon, Minnesota and New Mexico.

Washington, Dec. 18.

SENATE.—Messrs. Bright and South approved. Mr. Vance presented the resolutions of the Maryland Reform Convention, sustaining the compromise acts of last session, which were received and ordered to be printed.

The chair laid before the senate the report of the Court Survey.

A number of private bills were introduced. HOUSE.—The joint resolution of the Senate to fill vacancies in the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institute, passed.

Mr. Gillett introduced a bill to create the General Superintendent of Public Lands in California which was referred to the committee on Public Lands.

Mr. Plonk introduced a bill to make New York, a part of entry. Referred to committee on Commerce.

The house then went into Committee of the whole on Cheap Postage bill.

Report of the Secretary of Treasury.

New York, Dec. 17.

The report of the Secretary of Treasury came to hand today. It is a document of more than ordinary importance and interest.

The Secretary, alluding to the extent of expenditures over former years, says it is mainly, if not entirely the result of acts and measures enacted before the 1st of July, 1849, and accrued in the War and Navy Departments—pensioners, interest of the war debt, territorial government, survey of the coast of California, our connections with the Indians. The latter, he says, is the result of the treaty with Mexico.

However, the country will be amply compensated for these outlays. This increased expenditure demands the attention of Congress.

The frauds or the revenue especially require correction. They have become serious in amount, and seem to lie on the increase in spite of all the efforts of government. The present fiscal system fosters them, yet the treasury must for a long time be dependent on the receipts of duties on imports under the present system. The duties are highest when the articles imported are highest, and thus press heavily on both importers and consumers.

South Carolina Legislature.

New York, Dec. 17.

By the arrival of the Southerner we have the proceedings of the South Carolina Legislature down to Friday evening.

On Thursday the Legislature on the Federal relation was continued in the House by gentlemen Dayton and Lyles.

The first was opposed to separate State action unless a failure should occur in obtaining a confederation of other Southern States.

The other advocated immediate action by the State, and that should be decided.

On Friday Mr. Aiken opened the debate. He was in favor of the Convention of the people and of a Southern Congress, and would advise the recall of S. C. delegates from the present Congress.

The following is from the financial head of the New York Tribune. We hope there is good ground for the statement, though we regard it as premature. There are, undoubtedly, capitalists in the eastern cities, who will be ready to construct the road, provided the state offers them fair inducements to advance the means for that object. There is no danger just now, from the excited state of public feeling, that we shall demand too much. Let our people bear in mind, that with the aid of the grant of Congress, that we can build the central railroad, but cannot pay of the whole state debt, nor carry out the extraordinary system of 1848, which we are now indebted for our present embarrassments. Great caution is necessary. We must attempt this time, nothing but what is feasible and practical. We must deal fairly and liberally with capitalists, so that their interests will be best served by promoting our own—Springfield Register.

Some of the leading railroad men and capitalists of this city in connection with others of Boston and Philadelphia, will apply to the Legislature and the state of Illinois, at its next session in January, for a charter under the name of the "Great North-western Railroad Company," for the purpose of constructing the proposed railroad from Cairo, at the mouth of the Ohio river, to the southern terminus of the Illinois and Michigan canal, with branches extending to Galena and LaSalle, and to Chicago, embracing in all, upwards of 600 miles in length.

"In aid of this road, it will be recollected that congress, at its last session, granted some two and a half millions of acres of land, lying on its route. The provisions of the proposed charter are said to be very favorable to the state, while, at the same time, it offers inducements which will secure the requisite amount of capital to complete the road in the shortest possible time, and without the necessity of disposing of an acre of the donated land, until the road is open for use its whole length."

By Telegraph.

REPORTED FOR THE FREE TRADER.

Terrible Mob in Peoria!

The Murderers not Hung.—Several Persons badly hurt.

Peoria, Dec. 20.

Our city was again thrown into much excitement to-day. The execution of Brown and Williams, for the murder of Hewitt, was to have taken place to-day at noon; but, by an order of the Governor, received on Wednesday, the time was extended to the 16th of January next. This not being generally known, or credited, a large mob appeared from this and adjoining counties, assembled to witness the execution, and, being disappointed in their expectations, a portion of them resolved that the prisoners should be executed forthwith, and, urged on by exciting speeches, got possession of the scaffold, from the jail yard, and erected it on the street in front of the jail, they then effected an entrance, by breaking the door and racks, and proceeded with crowbars, scimitars, and other implements, to the cells; here they met with a desperate resistance from Brown, who, although shackled, as soon as his cell was opened, stepped into the hall, disarmed a few of the mob by taking from them their crowbars, scimitars, &c., broke a skull or two of the mobsters, and flying others; thus giving a striking illustration of his entire disapprobation of this unconstitutional procedure, he finally made his way back into the cell again, barricaded it on the inside and then defended them all. The mob fell back, and a few of our citizens stepped in at this juncture and prevented further violence to the prisoners. Mr. Ames secured their tools, and before night the crowd dispersed. Thus ended what all at first supposed would be a most serious and disgraceful affair.

Two Weeks Later From California.

New York, Dec. 20.

The Steamer Cherokee arrived to-day from Panama with two weeks later news from California. She reached her dock at 15 minutes past 12 o'clock. Her dates from California are to the 15th November.

The Cherokee brings 561 passengers and \$680,000 in gold.

The steamship Genesee arrived at Panama on the 21st inst., with two weeks later news from San Francisco. The mails had not reached Chicago when the Cherokee left. The Pacific had not arrived at Chicago on the 9th December.